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Agenda item 100 (b)

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Australia, Greece, Republic of Moldova and Russian Federation: draft resolution

Development of public information activities in the field of human rights

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming that activities to improve public knowledge in the field of human rights are essential to the fulfilment of the purposes of the United Nations set out in Article 1, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations and that carefully designed programmes of teaching, education and information are essential to the achievement of lasting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recalling the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights,

Recognizing the catalytic effect of initiatives of the United Nations on national and regional public information activities in the field of human rights,

Recognizing also the valuable role that non-governmental organizations can play in those endeavours,

Believing that the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights is a valuable complement to the activities of the United Nations aimed at the further promotion and protection of human rights, and recalling the importance attached by the World Conference on Human Rights to strengthening the World Campaign,

Welcoming the appointment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with the function, inter alia, of coordinating relevant United Nations education and public information programmes in the field of human rights, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993,

Recognizing that the Department of Public Information is the focal point for elaborating, coordinating and harmonizing United Nations policies and activities in the field of information, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report 1/ of the Secretary-General on the development of public information activities in the field of human rights, including the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights;

2. Appreciates the measures taken by the Department of Public Information and the Centre for Human Rights to ensure the further production and effective dissemination of human rights information materials in cooperation with regional, national and local organizations, as well as with Governments;

3. Notes with appreciation the dissemination by the Department of Public Information and the Centre for Human Rights of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action 2/ adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, and of information on follow-up activities;

4. Requests the Centre for Human Rights, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, to finalize its comprehensive review of the programme of information and publications in the field of human rights, including the elaboration of a new information strategy, and to make an assessment of the effectiveness of this programme, and encourages the Centre to continue its efforts towards streamlining and focusing its publications programme;

5. Encourages the Centre to continue the development of training courses and materials, including targeted training manuals for professional audiences, as well as the dissemination of human rights information materials as a component of technical assistance projects;

6. Welcomes the efforts of the Department of Public Information and the Centre for Human Rights to disseminate information on human rights by electronic means, including through the United Nations Bibliographic Information System;

7. Requests the Department of Public Information and the Centre actively to explore further possibilities for the production of computer-accessible human rights information and human rights databases;

1/ A/49/582.

2/ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

8. Urges the Department of Public Information to continue to utilize United Nations information centres for the purpose of timely dissemination, within their designated areas of activity, of basic information and reference materials on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the reports of States parties to treaty-monitoring bodies and, to this end, to ensure that United Nations information centres are supplied with adequate quantities of those materials;

9. Requests the Department of Public Information to continue to make use of the resources available for this purpose to produce audiovisual materials on human rights issues;

10. Requests the Secretary-General to take advantage as much as possible of the collaboration of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the World Public Information Campaign, including in the dissemination of human rights materials;

11. Encourages all Member States to make special efforts to provide, facilitate and promote publicity for the activities of the United Nations in the field of human rights, including through support of United Nations information centres, to accord priority to the dissemination in their respective national and local languages of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 3/ the International Covenants on Human Rights 4/ and other international instruments, as well as reports to human rights treaty bodies, and to provide information and education on the practical ways in which the rights and freedoms enjoyed under these instruments can be exercised;

12. Supports the recommendation contained in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (part II.D) adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights that Member States develop specific programmes and strategies for ensuring the widest human rights education and the dissemination of public information, taking particular account of the human rights needs of women, and encourages Member States, in drawing up national action plans for the promotion and protection of human rights, to include broad-based education and public information programmes on human rights;

13. Calls upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to coordinate and harmonize human rights information strategies within the United Nations system;

14. Calls upon the Centre for Human Rights to coordinate the substantive activities of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights pursuant to the direction of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, and to serve as liaison with Governments, regional and national institutions, non-governmental organizations and concerned individuals, in the development and implementation of the activities of the Campaign;

3/ Resolution 217 A (III).

4/ Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

15. Calls upon the Department of Public Information to coordinate the public information activities of the Campaign and, in its responsibility as secretariat to the Joint United Nations Information Committee, to promote coordinated system-wide information activities in the field of human rights;

16. Stresses the need for close cooperation between the Centre for Human Rights and the Department of Public Information in the implementation of the aims established for the World Public Information Campaign and the need for the United Nations to harmonize the activities in the field of human rights with those of other organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, with regard to the dissemination of information on international humanitarian law, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with regard to education for human rights;

17. Calls upon the Department of Public Information to undertake, as a priority, from within existing resources, the production and widest possible dissemination of an information kit on the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including in indigenous languages, to explain the concepts, terms and principles contained in the draft, and as a United Nations initiative to celebrate the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;

18. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution for consideration under the item entitled "Human rights questions".